

SWINDON & DISTRICT GROUP OF ADVANCED MOTORISTS

www.swindondrivers.com

07050 682842

Newsletter

November 2004

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Disclaimer

The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual contributor and are not those of the editor, the group, or of the Institute of Advanced Motorists.

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The Swindon & District Group of Advanced Motorists retains the names and addresses of all group members on computer for mailing and administrative purposes.

WHO'S WHO IN YOUR GROUP?

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Events - please contact **Ian Marshall, Debbie Herbert** or **Peter Thompson**. Regalia sales are managed on a non committee basis by **Tony Hand**.

CHAIRMAN'S RAMBLINGS

Welcome to the November edition of our Newsletter.

September saw Swindon Group's AGM, the election of a new Committee, and a number of significant changes to faces and roles. My thanks go to all members retiring, but specific mention is due to Derek Sheldrake and Chris Gleed who have been very prominent in their positions. Derek, as Group Secretary was known to all, he has also been (and I suspect still is) one of our most active Observers, we wish him luck as he starts to extend his retirement time. Chris Gleed has served the Committee in various roles over the years and due to time pressures has had to stand down from the formal position of Chief Observer this year. In the absence of an immediate replacement Chris has agreed to continue coordinating Associate pre-test runs through fellow Senior Observers, again thanks to Chris.

The new committee has some new faces, and some familiar faces in new positions. **Debbie Herbert** is our new **Group Secretary** and will deal with general administrative matters including correspondence with IAM Chiswick. **Phil Pomeroy** joins the Committee in the newly combined position of **Membership Secretary** and **Associate Rep**. The two roles rely heavily on information in the database held on the Group laptop, so this seemed a logical combination. **Peter Thomson** volunteered, post the AGM, to assist and has been co-opted on to committee and will coordinate events. Events is a team effort and both Debbie and Ian Marshall will assist. **Tony Hand** has volunteered to look after regalia sales, thank you Tony. Other unchanged members of committee include myself, **Ian Marshall**, **Margaret Brewer** and **Simon Byford**.

Accompanying this edition you should find the Group's annual report and accounts. You will see that we are developing positively as a Group and that we remain financially sound.

I mentioned at the AGM that it was our intention to run the Associate Guidance course again in November this year. We currently have 32 Associates, 8 of whom are awaiting allocation to an Observer to commence their runs. A number those waiting, and those already allocated attended the last course and the decision was made to defer the next course until Spring when we would have a better uptake.

Various pundits are predicting prolonged cold snaps over the coming months as we approach Winter. This is the time of year that our vehicles have to work the hardest, and as drivers we require enhanced observation and anticipation skills. Statistics show that that the coming season will result in the highest levels of killed and seriously injured on our roads, as advanced motorists we should continue to play our part in mitigating this. Anticipate the best but prepare for the worst.

Safe motoring, I look forward to seeing you at one of our Group Nights

Mark Simpson

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MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S NOTES

New Associates joining the Group

We welcome the following new Associates to the Swindon Group, and wish them well during their observed runs, and with their Advanced Driving Test. An Observer will be allocated to them as soon as one becomes available.

Mr Paul Blanchard Miss Suzanne Wright Mr Alun Griffiths
Mr Darren Davidse Mr Robert Berry

Test Passes

We would like to congratulate the following who have passed the Advanced Driving Test, and welcome them as full members of the Swindon Group. We would also like to thank the Observers for the time and dedication that they put in to assist the Associates become Advanced Drivers.

Alma Welby on 24/08/2004	Observed by Chris Gleed
Geoff Lawrence on 25/08/2004	Observed by Cynthia Howard
Amanda Coxhead on 01/09/2004	Observed by Dave Abbott
David Douch on 07/09/2004	Observed by Dave Abbott
Craig Le Cappelain on 07/09/2004	Observed by Derek Sheldrake

Craig is studying at Portsmouth University and had been a member of the Portsmouth Group. He was near the top of a long waiting list for an Observer when his three months summer break came and he had to returned home to Swindon. He asked if we could fit him in during that time to save having to rejoin their list. We were able to make a special case for him, and he responded well and passed. He has now returned to Portsmouth to continue his studies, and we wish him well.

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS

If you haven't yet renewed your Swindon group membership please could you do so as soon as possible using the form(s) included with the August edition of the newsletter. Please contact our treasurer (Margaret Brewer) - contact details are on page 2 if you have mislaid these.

WINTER DRIVING - A REMINDER

Driving in winter can pose numerous problems. Christmas is approaching quickly and health and safety isn't always top of everyone's list of priorities but it's important not to let your safety standards drop.

Drivers should consider adopting the following tips.

- Keep lights clean and your battery should be fully charged, add antifreeze to your radiator and additive to the windscreen washer bottle
- Check tyre tread depth and tyre pressure
- Use dipped headlights and reduce speed when driving in fog, ice or snow
- Use fog lights if visibility is seriously reduced. Remember that you must switch fog lights off as soon as visibility improves
- When roads are icy or slushy, drive slowly, allowing extra distance to slow down and stop
- Use the highest gear possible to avoid wheel spin
- Manoeuvre gently, avoid harsh braking and acceleration
- Use the engine and gears to slow the vehicle down and use the brake pedal gently
- If your vehicle skids, ease off the accelerator but don't brake suddenly
- Don't drive too close to the car in front
- Watch out for patchy fog

Before setting out on a journey in wintry weather, always ask yourself if the journey is absolutely essential, check local and national weather forecasts and travel information. Allow plenty of time for the journey. If possible tell someone when you expect to arrive, think about taking warm clothes, boots and a torch. Make sure your windows and mirrors are free of snow and ice before you set off .

Source - *BT Intranet*

THE PRINCE MICHAEL INTERNATIONAL ROAD SAFETY AWARD

BT's innovative and broad-based driver risk assessment programme - developed in partnership with consultants Interactive Driving Systems (IDS) - has been recognised for its contribution to road safety, receiving the prestigious Prince Michael International Road Safety Award for 2004.

According to BT group safety adviser Dave Wallington, over the past four years BT has undertaken many proactive steps to identify and reduce the risks faced by its employees.

He said: "One of the most wide ranging interventions has been its application of the IDS online RoadRISK assessment programme - called Starting Point in BT - which has helped to reduce the company's insurance claims by 30 per cent in recent years and eight per cent in the last 12 months.

"To date, more than 27,000 BT people have undertaken the assessment of their attitude, hazard perception, knowledge, behaviour and exposure. A similar number are scheduled to undertake the assessment in the coming months."

The Prince Michael Road Safety Award judges summed up the programme as follows: "BT is a company with a good safety culture. IDS has produced an easy to use assessment tool which is soundly based and well worthy of recognition as a significant contributor to improved occupational road safety."

In fact, Dave pointed out, no programme on a similar scale has been undertaken anywhere in the world, as the costs of developing individual driver based interventions across such a large number of drivers has traditionally been seen as too difficult to do in a large fleet.

He said: 'We identified that driving was one of the biggest and most expensive risks encountered by our employees and reviewed several interventions - including on-road and classroom-based driver training - but the costs and operational disruptions involved for an

organisation with more than 80,000 people and 50,000 vehicles made these options very impractical without an initial filter to identify the people most in need.

“The starting point assessment tool is easy to use, can be rolled out to a large number of employees over the corporate intranet and has allowed us to identify the drivers who are most likely to be at risk. Independent research has validated the programme and confirmed that - for BT - it was the correct approach.”

He added that, typically, the results from the Starting Point assessment are fed into a targeted training programme for both drivers and managers.

“This involves individual e-mail-based feedback, internet-based training, discussion workshops or - where it is deemed necessary - an appropriate form of on-road in-vehicle assessment and training targeted at the actual risks,” he explained.

Dave added that the beauty of winning the Prince Michael Road Safety Award is that it gives BT some recognition for the scale and success of its driver risk assessment programme.

“This provides the added motivation and buzz not to rest on our laurels but to continue the programme - for the remainder of our BT employees, for our contractors, sub-contractors and family members driving BT vehicles,” he said.

“Given our scale, we believe that we can influence general road safety within the wider communities in which we operate for the benefit of society as a whole.”

Source - *BT Today Online*

BRINGING DRIVING TESTS TO REMOTE AREAS

BT Broadcast Services has joined forces with electronic testing solutions company Pearson VUE to bring the theory part of the driving test to people living in remote areas.

Pearson VUE won the three-year contract from the Driving Standards Agency to run the theory part of the driving test.

The service - which uses mobile broadband via satellite from BT Broadcast Services - allows candidates to take the test from buses which travel to remote locations.

'Fold away' satellite dishes are fixed to the top of two buses - owned by Pearson VUE - which have been equipped with PC and server equipment. Using auto tracking software, the dishes are able to track and lock on to the correct satellite providing broadband access in minutes. BT Broadcast Services mobile satellite broadband is used to feed test results back to the Pearson VUE processing centre and a pass or fail mark is returned to the candidate in minutes.

The buses will initially be used on two routes in Scotland but soon the service will be offered in remote locations throughout the UK. The first route serves Portree, Kyle, Ullapool, Gairloch and Tongue and the second serves Elgin, Wick, Huntly and Helmsdale.

BT Broadcast Services installs and commissions the satellite equipment and BT supplies training in the use of the satellite service - enabling non technical staff to operate the service quickly and easily without any specific technical knowledge.

BT Broadcast Services broadband business development manager Fiona Byrne said: "Broadband via satellite offers an excellent way for remote locations outside digital subscriber line broadband coverage to continue to benefit from the services that high speed, high data internet access offers.

"The deal between BT broadcast services and Pearson VUE highlights the demand for such technology within the market and its application in this case is testament to the adaptability of the BT offering."
Source - *BT Today Online*.

HEALTH & SAFETY WEEK HIGHLIGHTS SAFE DRIVING

Safe driving was the focus of BT's contribution to this year's European Union Health and Safety (H&S) Week, starting Monday 18 October - with the company using the week as the launch pad for its first ever BT-wide Driver of the Year competition.

Mike Wagland - BT Retail's lead health and safety manager - said: "Driving is one of the highest risk activities any of us undertakes so we felt it would be appropriate to use it as our theme for H&S Week." The week was launched with a webcast featuring presentations from senior managers across the company and key players outside BT.

Mike said: "As well as providing details of the new Driver of the Year competition, we'll be illustrating how health and safety impacts on the wider issues of customer service and company success. We'll be reinforcing the fact that good health and safety is integral to the way we do things in this company."

As part of the week's activities, BT managers were invited to nominate people to participate in practical parking and manoeuvring workshops being run at 20 BT sites in the UK and Northern Ireland. The "Let's get Backing Control" sessions are designed to replicate typical incident scenarios and allow participants to master the skills necessary for safe low speed manoeuvring - identified as a key cause of company vehicle accidents.

Other issues addressed during H&S Week included driving licence and insurance checks, safe reversing, driver fatigue and the use of mobile phones.

BT people are being encouraged to reduce their driving time by using BT's conferencing facilities - such as BT "MeetMe" audio conferences, interactive web conferences and the 44 dedicated "SeeMe" video rooms available around the UK; and to make greater use of the driver safety assessment resources on the BT intranet.

Source - *BT Today Online*

BASINGSTOKE AND THE MILESTONES MUSEUM

My initial thoughts were that this would be an interesting visit for the Group to attend as the name "Milestones" gave the impression that it would focus on vehicles and their history. Discussions with other members at the April Group Night who had already visited, however, suggested that it was in fact more of a "living history museum". When the day came no one had put their name forward and Keith (my better half) was on call, so I set off on my own.

I thought that it would be an easy journey setting off down the M4 to Basingstoke. Keith had given instructions to come off at Newbury and go on the new bypass. The route then took in the A303, A30 and the back roads into Basingstoke to the Leisure Park. Very pretty/scenic - passing lots of pubs which had I not been on my own may have been tempting to stop for lunch!

Driving up through the Leisure Park you pass the Aquadrome/ Swimming pool with large flumes, Bingo hall, 10 Pin Bowling so a good place to take the children for the day. You may think you have missed it but keep driving and it is set on an area to the right hand side. From the outside Milestones Museum looks like a scene from the Teletubbies as it has a large metal curved roof and grass picnic area to the side with benches and table.

Opening times of Tuesday/Friday 10am - 5pm and Sat/Sun 11am - 5pm also opens on Bank Holiday Mondays from 10am - 5pm. The entrance fee was £6.50 for adults and £3.50 for children.

You get a detailed map and an *Audioguide* to listen to the points of interest, which you operate at your speed as you go through the museum. As you walk around you will see staff members dressed in period costumes putting on sideshows of that time. Authentic street scenes run through from the 1900s into the 2000s. There are railway locomotives that children can climb aboard and the story of Gas and Electrically powered appliances is told, right through to modern day washing machines. Then, on your exit, there is a show area featuring the history of the AA including toys, cars, bikes, clothing and uniforms detailing the changes throughout time complete with an old AA Mini van with sliding windows and push button floor start.

Not all details were up to date on their website: www.milestones-museum.com - but they do issue a leaflet on special events and exhibitions held throughout the year.

As parking is free it is also a good place to leave the car and do “park and ride” into the town centre. This is cheap and hassle free.

Debbie Herbert

BASINGSTOKE - WHAT TO SEE & SOME FACTS AND FIGURES

We encourage all Advanced Motorists to visit Basingstoke as it has a modern road system with many roundabouts to enjoy. There are some facts that you may find useful to know in advance of your visit. These will add value to your excursion and help you to make some comparisons with our own situation which should help you to reflect on the past, understand the present, and develop informed opinions in the future.

Basingstoke, is a large, prosperous, and modern town, with and major in and out of town shopping areas. According to the 2001 census the population of Basingstoke & Deane is 152,000 (larger than Reading (142,000) but smaller than Swindon (180,000)). There is a lot of housing, yet the surrounding countryside is pleasant.

The town is the headquarters of some of the UK's largest companies, and the Automobile Association. It also has significant Higher Education facilities linked to the Universities of Southampton and Portsmouth.

It has cinemas, The Haymarket Theatre, and The Anvil for entertainment and culture as well as many nightclubs and pubs.

It also boasts the recently opened Festival Place Shopping Centre, which has 165 shops, 26 restaurants, bars and cafes a 10 screen cinema and 3000 car parking spaces all within a controlled and secure environment.

Basingstoke has a thriving, well equipped, IAM affiliated group, it's membership possibly boosted by the fact that neighbouring Reading doesn't have a car group at the moment (it's a RoSPA stronghold).

THE FALKIRK WHEEL

If ever you are in Scotland, I can recommend a trip to see the Falkirk Wheel, which is between Edinburgh and Glasgow. It is a fantastic piece of modern engineering and architecture.

Many of you will have seen or heard of the Caen Hill flight of locks on the Kennet & Avon Canal at Devizes, not too far from Swindon, where there are 17 locks in quick succession.



At Camelon, near Falkirk, there was a similar flight, where boats from the lower Forth & Clyde Canal were raised 34 metres up to the Union Canal by a flight of 11 locks. Like many Canals during the 20th century, they became closed to boat traffic.

These canals became dumping grounds for supermarket trolleys and other debris. In an attempt to clean the area, and to bring the canals back to life, Britain's largest, and most ambitious canal restoration project began, and was led by the British Waterways and many local authorities along the route.

It involved the repair or reconstruction of many of its 500 structures, including bridges, locks, and aqueducts along the 112km of the canals. It was to be known as the Millennium Link. Financing the scheme ran into difficulties, and the five year rescue plan had to be reduced to three. Parts of the route had been infilled during the years and new sections had to be dug.

In May 2002, when the Falkirk Wheel was opened by Her Majesty The Queen, the two Canals were again joined after a period of 70 years by the worlds first rotating boat lift, the Falkirk Wheel.

The Wheel is a massive structure and weighs 1200 tonnes. It consists of two large gondolas 27 metres long, each weighing 50 tonnes, mounted into large round mounting rings at each end, which rotate on a central axis. Each gondola is filled with 250 tonnes of water and boats, and is raised or lowered 25 metres from the aqueduct above to the basin below.



How many of you remember Archimedes Principle, where anything that will float, displaces its own weight of water?

This is how the Wheel works in principle. When a boat enters the gondola, whether it is full of passengers or empty, each gondola will weigh the same.

At each end of the gondolas there is a door, which flaps up and down on a horizontal hinge. There is also a similar flap door at the end of the aqueduct and at the entrance to the basin below. When the gondolas are in place, there is a hydraulically operated seal, which closes the small gap between them. This gap is then filled with water and the doors are lowered to allow the boats in and out.

The boat journey into and out of the gondola takes 15 minutes overall to complete, during which time the Wheel takes five minutes to rotate the half turn from top to bottom. Large gears rotate the gondolas within the structure as it moves from top to bottom, keeping them level and preventing them from turning over.

The power required to rotate the Wheel is remarkably small. After the initial start, it only requires the same power as six electric kettles to keep it moving, because it is so well balanced.

Another great advantage is that it uses less water to transport the boats up and down. A conventional lock discharges many gallons of water down stream every time a boat passes through it. In times of water shortage, this could be a problem. With the Wheel, the gondolas remain full all of the time. The water levels in the aqueduct, gondolas, and the lower basin are all monitored and controlled round the clock via a system of sensors, valves and bypass pipes.

The Forth & Clyde Canal is the oldest in Scotland, and was originally known as The Great Canal. When it opened in 1777, it went from Grangemouth, on the Firth of Forth to Glasgow. It was extended 13 years later to Bowling, on the river Clyde, creating the world's first sea to sea ship canal. The Union Canal was added in 1822, connecting the canal system with Edinburgh.

There is a wonderful visitors centre there, which explains everything about the history of the Canals, and how and why the Wheel was constructed. The ambitious scheme is creating a good deal of employment along the canal with the leisure industry and canal side developments.



I acquired a number of books and pictures of the area while I was there, and if anyone wants more information before going, they have only to contact me first and I will pass on the information to them.

Derek Sheldrake

SEPTEMBER GROUP NIGHT - GUEST SPEAKER REVIEW

Unfortunately I missed the September Group Night and AGM as I was away on holiday (skiing in Chile).

I understand from Mark that with over 100 members, the interest to join us on the committee was low again this year - it is still worth considering how you can help the group throughout the coming year. We must all think of what will happen next September when Mark steps down. If at anytime you feel "YES" I could do that role then please come forward, with a good supporting team it does make the position easier. Teamwork is what it is all about - I know I am thankful that Pete has now come onboard to help arrange new and interesting guest speakers at times it has been hard as I do not work within the motoring industry but for the NHS.

David Douch is one of our newest members and has already put back something into the group by speaking on issue relating to the motor industry. After the AGM at September's Group Night David ran through some of the Insurance Group Ratings and gave a handout on the following points: Insurance Groups, What affects the UK Insurance Group?, What the Manufacturers Do Not Know?, Security Attack Testing, Additional Insurance Costs to You?, Insurance Cost by Area Code, The Future and finally the Sting in the Tail.

I think we are all hoping that the Government will continue to work on a scheme whereby to drive and own a motor vehicle we must ALL have valid insurance. This at present seems very hard to "police" as it is not only the 14 - 17 year olds that go out joy riding in stolen cars but it does appear from reading the local paper that more and more people are saying "Why should I bother".

Having just put my car through the MOT, RFL and the Insurance October is a costly month. I also have my car serviced twice a year although the manufacturer say yearly, this with the checks I leave hubby to do on a Sunday, I could say I feel "safe" in my car.

But - As you are all aware it's the "Other" drivers !! Better policing and communications between the Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency and the removal/crushing of these uninsured vehicles must eventually make our roads safer. (Thanks to **Debbie Herbert**)

OCTOBER GROUP NIGHT - GUEST SPEAKER REVIEW

At our Group Night in October we were pleased to have paramedic Andy Newman from the Wiltshire Air Ambulance Team based in Devizes come to the Blunsdon House Hotel as our guest speaker.

Before Andy joined the team he had previously worked for six and a half years with the Royal Mail. In 1988 he felt it was time for a change and has not looked back since. He has gone on to complete a part time degree course and still undergoes intensive training sessions for his job.

The following are some of the tried and tested helicopters that since the realisation of the importance of Rapid Transportation of Patients from the scene of an accident/collision the teams have been working with: Gazelle, Bolkow BO105, Robinson R22, Bell Jet Ranger, AS355 Twin Squirrel to the now popular MD902 Explorer. The crew consists of the Pilot (usually ex Army or Navy trained), The Paramedic and a Police Officer/Observer.

The base location in Devizes has been ideal for dealing with casualties that need urgent treatment and they work with a 15 minute target to any area within the county; Chippenham, Swindon, Marlborough, Warminster and Salisbury. They have a flying fuel time of 2 hrs and must fly within the CCA regulations and restrictions. They would be grounded during lightning and foggy weather conditions. The team normally operates during the hours of 8am to 3am. They support the 9 ambulance stations based within the same area that have a response time of 8 mins. (This is achievable 95% of the time).

In 1990 the Wiltshire Air Support unit was formed in partnership with the Wiltshire Ambulance Service and the Wiltshire Constabulary. The cost today to lease the aircraft is £1.2m pa. of which the Air Ambulance side have to contribute £320,000. The unit operates as a Registered Charity and they raise money through fund raising events and donations.

All those that purchased raffle tickets during the evening will be happy to know that we raised £28.00, which we donated to the Air Ambulance Appeal .

Donations should be sent to :

Mary Laing
Wiltshire Air Ambulance Appeal
Police Headquarters
London Road
Devizes
SN10 2DN

Mary will also be happy to arrange a visit to Devizes so that our Group can look around the station and hopefully get a closer look at the helicopter

Please speak to either Peter Thomson or myself if you are interested, as we will need names and numbers. The visit will probably take place on Wednesday 13th or 20th April 2005.

Unfortunately Wednesday is the only day they offer such visits but they are also able to offer early evening bookings up to 6:30 - 7:00pm

(Thanks to **Debbie Herbert**)

HIGH TECH CAR SECURITY

Research has revealed that more than 50 per cent of the cars under six years old that are stolen in the UK - around 500 cars every day - are taken as a result of the theft and use of the car's own key.

To help motorists tackle this rise in key-targeted car crime and improve vehicle recovery rate, BT Redcare - BT's specialist alarm signalling and remote monitoring division - has launched an innovative vehicle security system that enables stolen cars to be tracked across Europe.

BT Redcare auto-txt uses state of the art tracking technology that monitors and tracks a vehicle in order to identify when it is moved without authorisation - and enables it to be remotely immobilised following a reported theft.

It operates through the use of Bluetooth wireless technology - which allows the car owner to activate the system independently of the car key - advanced car electronics and satellite navigation. One unique feature is that car owners can 'talk' to their vehicle via a Bluetooth enabled device - for instance, a mobile phone - keeping them in control of the situation, even though their car may be many miles away. Longer term, says BT, the system could provide information on all elements of the car's operations.

BT Redcare managing director Jon Furmston said: "The continuously monitoring BT Redcare auto-txt mobile technology tells BT's secure operating centre when a vehicle is moved without authorisation.

"The centre informs the owner that the car has been moved - and can liaise with the police to arrange for the vehicle's ignition to be disabled when it is parked again. Using the system, a car can be tracked across 27 European Union (EU) countries."

Jon added that BT Redcare auto-txt is one of the first vehicle security products to be awarded the new industry Category 5 standard. He said: "Category 5 was launched by Thatcham - the insurance industry's official body for testing and approving security products - at the end of September and is supported by both the Association of British Insurers and Association of Chief Police Officers."

Jon pointed out that the new Category 5 standard is a major step forward in car security. "By putting modern, wireless technology at the centre of vehicle recovery, BT Redcare has developed a product that meets the standard in every way - offering a unique defence against car crime and a new application for the mobile market," he said.

"It provides peace of mind for the car owner and reduces risk for the insurance industry - and is also an example of the innovation that is driving BT towards its target of £1 billion annual revenue from mobility and convergence in five years."

Jon added that BT is currently in talks with a number of car manufacturers about fitting BT Redcare auto-txt on their top range vehicles.

Source - *BT Today Online*

NEW DISCOUNT

Fish Brothers Peugeot are pleased to offer our members a 20% discount on car and van rental. They have a wide range of vehicles available from the compact 206 to the 8 seater 807, including the new 407 SW, plus 3 sizes of van. The excellent rates include unlimited mileage, fully comprehensive insurance and RAC breakdown cover. Delivery and collection is available within the Swindon area.

To contact Fish Brothers Peugeot rental, phone 01793 401118 or 07970 900318, or visit them on Great Western Way, by Mannington roundabout.

Please mention the IAM when booking and show your group membership card on collection to take advantage of this offer.

Thanks to **Philip Pomeroy** for negotiating this new membership benefit.

ONE FOR YOUR CHRISTMAS STOCKING?

Remember last year - when the receipt of a neatly wrapped package containing the *"Roundabouts of Swindon Calendar 2004"* was the thing you wanted most of all early on Christmas morning?

Unfortunately, at the time of writing, a 2005 edition of the calendar hadn't been confirmed. In the meantime the *Dull Men's Club* (DMC) website has brought us some relief by bringing to our attention a *"great book that dull men will certainly want to have. . . You can read about the typical roundabout spotter . . . and you can see a wonderful roundabout with an electricity pylon square in the middle of it."*

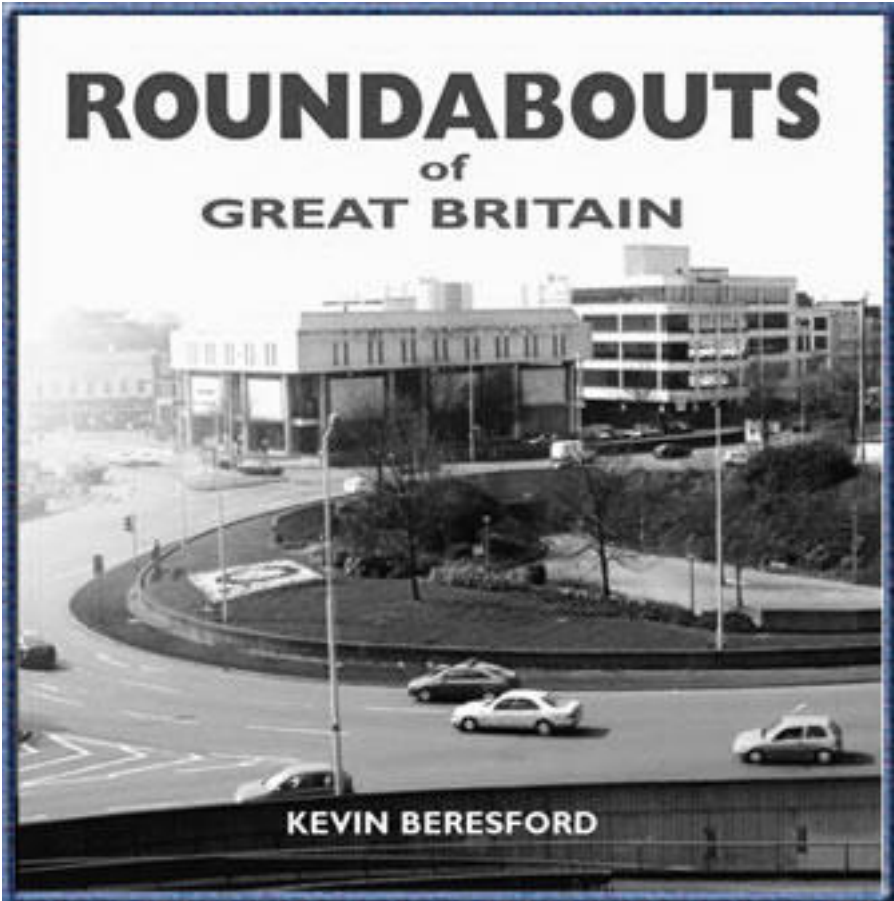
As Advanced Motorists and Swindonians we enjoy the privileged insight that roundabouts are not dull at all. For us they hold an intrinsic cultural significance as well as a mystical symbolism which pervades our complex individual psyches and wider collective consciousness.

Readers will also be happy to know that the roundabout in question is Swindon's very popular Meads Roundabout (the one we use to go to Sainsburys).

Our roundabout features in *"Roundabouts of Great Britain"* by Kevin Beresford which is now available for £6.39. Amazon's synopsis of the book says:

"This is the first ever book devoted to the popular hobby of roundabout spotting. A self-confessed traffic-island fanatic, author Kevin Beresford has travelled the length and breadth of the country to record the very best of the species, which range in scope from humble painted minis to magnificent landscaped beauties. Some feature works of art or are wildlife havens, others are sources of local history or simply have that certain something that sets them apart. Featuring over 80 of his favourites in glorious full-colour, he offers advice on the practical side of the pastime, with an exposition of the traffic-island's colourful history, following its French and American roots through to the first British roundabout in Letchworth and up to the present day".

On “Roundabout Spotters” the DMC has only this to say - *“the typical spotter is generally single and male, has reams of roundabout information amassed from local libraries, town halls and traffic island inspectors, and is very useful to glean roundabout facts from but never agrees to meet later for a drink”*.



The book’s cover features the Brunel roundabout in Slough made famous by its appearance in the opening sequence to the BBC series “The Office”.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The following events are all scheduled to take place at the Blunsdon House Hotel (commencing 19:30):

1st December 2004

Options Plus - Car Mobility (Jenny Baylis)

January 2005

NO GROUP NIGHT

2nd February 2005

St John Ambulance (Bob Sanderson & Shirley Cox)

2nd March 2005

British Horse Society (Julie Garbut with a Road Safety Officer)

Don't forget **The Caravan & Leisure Show** at London's Earls Court -
Dates : 2 - 7 November 2004

Opening Hours :

Tuesday - Saturday 10am - 6pm and Sunday 10am - 5pm

Admission Price :

On the door - £10.00 Seniors £9.00 Children under 16 free

For further information www.caravanshow.com
or ticket hotline : 08701 288288

REMEMBER - FOR ALL THE LATEST NEWS ABOUT YOUR GROUP

VISIT

www.swindondrivers.com